UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
LIMITED

A/AC.115/L.679
20 August 1991
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC/ENGLISH/
FRENCH/SPANISH

SPECIAL COMMITTEE AGAINST APARTHEID

MESSAGES RECEIVED ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE STRUGGLE OF WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

(Issued in accordance with a decision taken by the Special Committee at its 651st meeting on 9 August 1991)

CONTENTS

		Page
I.	MESSAGES FROM MEMBER STATES	3
	Barbados	3
	Burkina Faso	4
	Colombia	5
	Cuba	5
	Cyprus	6
	Ecuador	7
	Ghana	7
	Guinea	8
	Guyana	9
	Jamaica	9
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	10
	Mali	12

CONTENTS (continued)

		Page
	Pakistan	12
	Peru	13
	Sudan	14
	Suriname	14
	Thailand	14
	Trinidad and Tobago	15
	Tunisia	15
	Vanuatu	16
	Venezuela	16
II.	MESSAGES FROM NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	17
	SOVIET AFRO-ASIAN SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE	17
	WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS	17

I. MESSAGES FROM MEMBER STATES

BARBADOS

Message from Mr. David Thompson, Minister of Community Development and Culture with Responsibility for Women's Affairs

[Original: English]

Today, Barbados joins with supporters of racial equality all over the world in solidarity with the courageous women of South Africa in their struggle against apartheid.

We are, however, joining in solidarity amidst a clamour for the relaxation and, indeed, the end of sanctions against South Africa in recognition of the recent actions of the De Klerk Government in releasing Nelson Mandela from prison and in repealing certain individual apartheid laws.

There is no gainsaying that these actions are significant compared to two decades ago. However, on a more fundamental level, these changes are merely cosmetic when the bastion of the apartheid system, the Constitution of South Africa and what it proclaims, remains unreformed.

As we unite on this special day, Barbados calls upon the international community to consider carefully any premature calls for the arrest of sanctions against South Africa. By the same token, it calls upon the South African Government not only to repeal individual apartheid laws but to address as a matter of priority the issue of constitutional reform.

For as long as the constitutional structure of apartheid remains intact, the systemn of apartheid will remain untouched. As long as the system of apartheid remains in place, the position of women and children in South Africa will not change.

For 42 years the women of South Africa have been bearing the brunt of that accursed system. They have had to suffer the indignity along with their offspring, of not being able to enjoy full sovereign rights in their own country and they have had to bear the persistent inhuman practices which the apartheid system perpetuates, among which are the desolation of separation and the breakdown of family life. If that were not all, they also suffer disproportionately from poverty, poor health and illiteracy.

What can one say to women who in the face of such odds continue to fight on the front line in the war against apartheid?

We are humbled by such courage and determination and encourage the women of South Africa, especially the black women in the homelands and in the women's organizations, to continue the struggle.

We further call upon the Government of South Africa to ensure that every opportunity is provided for the black women and children of South Africa to exercise their human and sovereign rights by participating in the constructive efforts of national liberation under a reformed Constitution based on the principle of non-discrimination against all of its citizens.

Today the women of Barbados are free but they too have had to wage their own war against discrimination.

Barbados looks forward to the day, hopefully very soon, when equality, development and peace, which is the United Nations theme for the Decade of Women 1976-1985, resound in the life experiences of our sisters and their children in South Africa, as it does for women and children throughout much of the world.

BURKINA FASO

Message from Captain Blaise Compaoré, Chairman of the Popular Front, Head of State and Head of Government of Burkina Faso

[Original: French]

The observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women of South Africa, on 9 August 1991, assumes special significance this year, in view of the development of the internal political situation in that country.

Although this struggle is an integral part of the overall struggle of the progressive forces in South Africa in that it aims at building a society freed from the odious system of apartheid, it none the less has a specific nature. There are three reasons for this special nature.

The struggle against apartheid is, first and foremost, the struggle of a majority which has been victimized by age-old a prioris stemming from a mistaken conception of the role of women in society. Here Burkina Faso calls on the women of South Africa to unite because, as women, they are relegated to second place, even though, in fact, they constitute the majority.

It is also a struggle against violence and its concommitant misfortunes. What woman in South Africa has not mourned the death of a son, a husband or a brother owing to the implementation of this cynical racist policy? It is a struggle against inter alia deprivation of all kinds, useless sacrifice, anguish, arbitrary arrest and physical and mental violence.

Finally, it is a struggle of love, a struggle for human dignity, a struggle of hope, to rid mankind of the scourge that is apartheid. Here the struggle of the women of South Africa has won the support of the women of Burkina Faso and of the people of Burkina Faso as a whole, for the lot of these women without a doubt reflects all the misfortunes of the world.

On this anniversary I should like, on behalf of the women, mothers and people of Burkina Faso and on my own behalf, to encourage the Special Committee against Apartheid and to congratulate it warmly on the gigantic and noble task it must continue to pursue as long as this odious system survives.

Burkina Faso has supported and will continue to support the past, present and future struggles of the women of South Africa.

May the sacrifices that these women continue to make serve as leaven in the building of a truly democratic South Africa and give strength to the oppressed throughout the world.

COLOMBIA

Message from Mr. Luís Fernando Jaramillo Correa, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Spanish]

The observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women of South Africa gives Colombia another opportunity to reaffirm its support for the South African masses which are fighting the shameful apartheid regime and fighting to transform South Africa into a united, democratic and non-racial society in which justice and safety will prevail for all its citizens.

We have welcomed the measures being taken by the Government of President F. W. de Klerk and we hope that, by adequately responding to the just aspirations of the people of South Africa, they will put an end to the apartheid system and pave the way for the building of an egalitarian nation in which considerations of race, colour, sex or creed will have no place.

CUBA

Message from Mr. Isidoro Malmierca, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Spanish]

In recent weeks, the long and heroic struggle of the South African people under the leadership of the African National Congress (ANC) and the pressure of the international community led by the United Nations, have succeeded in getting the Government of South Africa to take a few steps which could lead to the total elimination of apartheid. However, while noting these positive developments, we cannot ignore the fact that the oppression, exploitation and racial violence which have traditionally characterized that shameful system continue to prevail in that country both at the institutional level and in practice.

The observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women of South Africa is a fitting occasion to recall and to reaffirm the unswerving commitment of the United Nations and all States to fighting for the eradication of apartheid and its consequences, not only in South Africa but also in the front-line States, and to keeping up the pressure on the racists until the universal desire to achieve a free, united and non-racial South Africa becomes a reality.

It is no accident that South African women are the object of particular solidarity. It is they who have suffered the pain of seeing their homes destroyed, their children persecuted and their husbands compelled to emigrate in order to work. It is they who have done without medical treatment and education and who have always been the object of the intrinsic violence of the racist system.

As a member of the international community, Cuba reiterates its continuing support for the cause of the South African people and, on this occasion, its support in particular for the women of South Africa.

At the same time we take this opportunity to recall that it is not yet time to ease the pressure on the South African authorities by taking inadmissible unilateral actions to lift the sanctions imposed by the United Nations; those who genuinely and sincerely wish to put an end to racism must cooperate closely with the United Nations in the collective efforts to combat that large-scale violation of the human rights of the entire people of South Africa known as aparthied until it has been definitively and irreversibly eliminated.

CYPRUS

Message from Mr. George Iacovou, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: English]

Today, as we observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa, our memories turn back, 35 years ago, to that day when thousands of South African women demonstrated against the racist regime's pass laws and demanded respect for the values cherished by humanity.

The heroism of the women of South Africa, their commitment to the cause of freedom and justice and their firm determination for the abolition of the inhuman and unjust system of apartheid have been a source of inspiration for the oppressed people all over the world.

As we commemorate today, once again, their courageous struggles, we see positive developments in South Africa. These developments, though encouraging and promising, are not enough.

Cyprus, while welcoming the recent developments as steps in the right direction, believes that the international community has to maintain pressure on South Africa, until the complete eradication of apartheid and until South Africa is transformed into a non-racial, democratic, unified country.

The abhorrent system of apartheid must be totally dismantled and the suppressed people of South Africa must attain their basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, in conformity with the United Nations resolutions and the consensus Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa, adopted by the General Assembly on 14 December 1989 in its resolution S-16/1.

ECUADOR

Message from Mr. Diego Cordovez, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Spanish]

On the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women of South Africa on 9 August 1991, the thirty-fifth anniversary of the historic march of South African women to Pretoria to oppose the imposition of the pass laws which further reduced their legal and social status and their living conditions, I wish to reiterate yet again, on behalf of the Government and people of Ecuador, our support for all who, sparing no sacrifice, are fighting to secure the abolition of the apartheid system and the recognition of their legitimate rights and freedoms.

I also wish to express our sincerest wishes that the measures which the Government of South Africa is currently adopting, which constitute a positive development, will culminate in the establishment of a genuine and authentic democracy in that country as soon as possible.

GHANA

Message from Flt. Lt. J. J. Rawlings, Chairman of the Provisional National Defence Council

[Original: English]

On this solemn occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa, I wish, on behalf of the people and Government of Ghana and on my own behalf, to salute you and other members of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid for the effective way you have, during the year, kept world attention focused on the indignity and inequality women in South Africa suffer under the inhuman and shameful policy of apartheid.

Thirty-five years ago today, the world awoke to the spectacular manifestations of the indomitable spirit of the struggling women of South Africa when they openly defied the oppressive and dehumanizing machinery of apartheid and openly demonstrated their objection to, and abhorrence of, the pass laws. Today, South Africa stands on the threshold of re-entry into the comity of nations, rid of racist laws and policies. The legislative pillars of apartheid, including the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936, the Group Areas Act of 1966 and the Development of Black Communities Act of 1984 have been repealed. The notorious Population Registration Act has been scrapped. Some racist laws, including the Bantu Education Act, still remain in the statute books. The changes, though welcomed, fall far short of the standard set in the Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa adopted by consensus on 14 December 1989 by the General Assembly of the United Nations at its sixteenth special session. We fervently hope that the practical actions that are needed to translate the repeal of those laws into social reality for the long oppressed peoples of South Africa are now in motion. Without them, the repeal of those laws are totally meaningless.

As we observe this Day, we salute the courage of the women of South Africa and call upon the international community to remain steadfastly committed to the programme of action spelt out in the Declaration until there are "profound and irreversible" changes in South Africa.

We the people and Government of Ghana avail ourselves of this solemn occasion to re-dedicate ourselves to the legitimacy of the struggle of the women in South Africa to free themselves from the stranglehold of apartheid; we reaffirm our faith in fundamental human rights, human dignity and equality of the rights of all men and women, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and reiterate our belief in the self-evident truth that the struggle of the women in South Africa is part and parcel of the struggle of the world to ensure peace among all nations and peoples on the basis of true freedom and justice.

GUINEA

Message from General Lansana Conté, President of the Republic of Guinea

[Original: French]

As we observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa today, 9 August 1991, we take the opportunity to send you, on behalf of the people and Government of Guinea, our sincere and warm congratulations on the positive and dogged role which the United Nations has constantly played in the struggle against apartheid and racial discrimination. We pay tribute to it and express our profound solidarity with the determined women of South Africa whose bravery and heroism are bit by bit pushing back the barriers of the shameful policy of apartheid whose dismantling the Republic of Guinea has always advocated. It is with this in

mind that the Government of Guinea joins with all people of good will in calling for increased moral and material support from the international community so as to enable the women of South Africa to play a more positive role in building a new, democratic and egalitarian society in South Africa; we warmly welcome it.

GUYANA

Message from the Government

[Original: English]

Guyana salutes the heroic struggle of the mothers of Africa against the iniquitous system of apartheid. Their watershed protest against the pass laws, an event whose thirty-fifth anniversary we commemorate today, revealed their dogged determination to confront the guns and bullets of the oppressors as they sought justice for their generation and the generations to come.

For them, life under an oppressive regime, one which deliberately stripped them of their humanity, was not worth living. They showed that they were quite prepared to pay the supreme sacrifice in quest of the freedom to traverse their beloved motherland.

Three decades later the authorities seem to have come to their senses and are now evidently agreed that apartheid is a crime against humanity, a fact which the international community was well aware of. The pass laws are among the external trappings that have been stripped away. Other segments of the apartheid structure are also now history.

But the struggle is not yet over. There are still victories to be won. It is the sincere hope of the people and Government of Guyana that the remaining apartheid forms and practices will finally go without the further shedding of innocent blood. For too long the unnecessary wastage of life and limb has gone on. Even as the dawn of a new day beckons, Guyana renews its solidarity with the mothers of South Africa who have had to witness the painful loss of their offspring and many of their own number.

JAMAICA

Message from the Government

[Original: English]

This year we commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa at a most significant juncture in the history of that country. The repeal, in recent months, of legislation which constituted the main pillars of apartheid has raised the hope of all black South Africans that their country will, in the not too distant future, be transformed into a democratic, non-racial society.

Indeed, the light at the end of the long, dark tunnel seems to glow a little brighter for the women in South Africa who have during the last four decades suffered the most dehumanizing consequences of the apartheid system.

Notwithstanding the legal reforms which have taken place, the practices of apartheid persist. We are mindful of the fact that apartheid still dominates and shapes the lives of black South African women who remain trapped in "homelands" living in substandard conditions where they battle daily against hunger, disease and despair.

In addition to the struggle for economic survival, the black women of South Africa continue to have their lives torn apart by prolonged violence. Too often we hear the cries of the women in Natal and other provinces, who have lost their loved ones to the senseless violence which threatens the reform process. Indeed, mothers of South Africa have had to stand by helplessly as they watch their children suffer and die in the fight.

In spite of their pain and anguish, black South African women continue their heroic struggle for the realization of their lifelong dream of freedom and the right to participate in the democratic process which ensures each citizen his and her vote.

The Government of Jamaica urges the international community not to relax its support for their cause. It is important that sanctions be maintained until black and white South Africans have equal rights and justice under the law.

On this solemn occasion, therefore, Jamaica renews its pledge of solidarity with the black women in South Africa in their valiant struggle.

LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA

Message from Mr. Ibrahim M. Bishari, Secretary of the People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation

[Original: Arabic]

Women in South Africa have played a significant role in the struggle of their people for the elimination of racism and racial discrimination and for the establishment of a State of South Africa that is free, democratic and untrammelled by discrimination. The commemoration here today of the thirty-fifth International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa gives concrete expression to the esteem of the United Nations and the international community as a whole for this role and their support for the struggle and its objectives.

In the last few months, South Africa has witnessed important developments which demonstrate that the long struggle of the people of this country for

complete freedom has begun to bear fruit. The winds of change have begun to blow through the region with increasing force, as is exemplified by the abrogation of most of the laws that provided the foundation for the apartheid regime. The ban on the activities of political organizations has been repealed, many political prisoners have been set free, and the state of emergency has been lifted. These developments clearly demonstrate that change is now taking place in South Africa. The fact must not, however, be ignored that the way to true and irreversible transformation remains fraught with danger. That many prisoners remain in detention, that restrictions on the return of thousands of exiles continue to be maintained and that violations continue and are instigated by the authorities of the racist regime using all possible means, including money, not only constitute obstacles to a negotiated solution but have heightened tension and created an atmosphere of mistrust that has prevented the emergence of the appropriate conditions for free political activity conducive to the beginning of negotiations on the framing of a new, non-racist and democratic constitution.

The international community has committed itself to the complete elimination of the regime of racial discrimination. Through the resolutions and declarations that it has adopted, it has identified the appropriate ways to achieve this objective, which include the embargo and the imposition of sanctions. Today, despite the measures taken to dismantle apartheid, what has happened thus far does not meet all of the desiderata established. It is therefore premature for the international community to slacken its pressure on the racist regime or to mitigate the measures imposed upon it; continued adherence to pressure tactics and to sanctions will be a decisive factor in compelling the Pretoria regime to introduce real and irreversible changes and to remove all obstacles to the establishment of a society free of discrimination. At another level, the international community must make of the occasion that we are now commemorating an opportunity to highlight the role of women struggling in South Africa, to acquaint public opinion with the contribution that women can make to efforts to build South Africa and to urge that they should be provided with the necessary resources to help them play a positive role in building the new society of South Africa. The great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, which has always sided with the people of South Africa in its struggle for the restoration of its rights and fundamental freedoms and which has assiduously participated in all occasions for the mobilization of support for this struggle, today reaffirms that it will continue to be a buttress of support for the struggle of the people of South Africa until the fulfilment of its hopes for the elimination of all manifestations of racial separatism and the establishment of a free and democratic State of South Africa purged of all discrimination.

The Special Committee against Apartheid has always been assiduous in commemorating the occasions on which the people of South Africa has shown distinctive heroism. Let me therefore take this opportunity to commend the Committee under your wise guidance not only for organizing this commemoration but for the leading role that it plays in the context of the struggle of the United Nations and of the international community against the universally condemned apartheid regime.

MALI

Message from Lt. Colonel Amadou Toumani Touré, President of the Transitional Committee for the Salvation of the People

[Original: French]

As the international community and all peace- and justice-loving peoples observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa I wish, on behalf of the people of Mali, its Transitional Committee for the Salvation of the People and its Government, and on my own behalf, to reaffirm our unshakeable solidarity with the oppressed peoples of South Africa in their just fight for liberty, equality and justice. This historic day marks a turning point in the struggle against apartheid. Thirty-five years ago in South Africa, women, outraged by the ignoble practice of racial segregation, stood up to the repressive hordes of Pretoria and demonstrated heroically against the racist pass laws, thus showing their willingness to make the supreme sacrifice to put an end to the odious apartheid system. On this thirty-fifth anniversary of that milestone in the struggle against apartheid, all forces for peace and progress must pay profound homage to the memory of the valiant sons of South Africa who were killed in action and work for the adoption of appropriate measures to bring about a just and democratic society in South Africa. It is the earnest wish of the people of Mali that this anniversary will help raise the awareness of the international community and contribute to the total and complete eradication of apartheid.

PAKISTAN

Message from Mr. Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister

[Original: English]

Pakistan joins the world community in commemorating the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa. On this day, 35 years ago, the courageous women of South Africa staged a gallant demonstration to protest against the racist regime's unfair pass laws. This courageous stand, under the most daunting circumstances, has provided undiminished courage to the people of South Africa to continue the anti-apartheid movement and fight for the attainment of their basic human rights. The South African women have also played a significant part in accelerating the campaign for the elimination of apartheid and racist laws in South Africa.

Pakistan condemns the policy of apartheid because it is against the basic tenets of Islam, degrades human beings and runs counter to all norms of civilized behaviour. Pakistan has therefore supported and fully observed the United Nations resolutions calling for comprehensive mandatory sanctions against the Pretoria regime. In keeping with our policy, we do not maintain

any political, economic or commercial links with that country and have consistently supported the struggle of the South African people for equality, justice and majority rule.

Pakistan welcomes the positive developments in South Africa that have resulted in the release of black nationalist leaders, lifting of the ban on the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) and the repeal of certain racist laws affecting the registration of the population by race. Despite these changes, however, the black majority of the South African population, especially women, are not treated as equals and remain victims of an unjust system. We therefore endorse the decision of the international community, in particular the Organization of African Unity (OAU), to continue the sanctions until such time as apartheid is completely abolished from the statute books and from all segments of South African society.

On behalf of the people and Government of Pakistan and on my own behalf, I renew our pledge of continued and unequivocal support to and solidarity with the women of South Africa in their noble struggle to achieve their just and legitimate aspirations.

PERU

Message from Dr. Carlos Torres y Torres Lara,
Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Spanish]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa, the Government of Peru wishes to renew its steadfast support for the struggle being carried on by women against the shameful apartheid system.

In solidarity with the just cause of peoples seeking equality and respect for their cultural identity, and in line with the political constitution of Peru, which rejects all forms of imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism and racial discrimination, the Government of Peru reaffirms its commitment to the just purpose of the South African majority to build a democratic society.

Since apartheid is an inhuman system, women and children have suffered the most from its cruel consequences. Despite this, in the struggle against that system, women have been and continue to be an example of steadfastness. Their courage has been fundamental in the effort to eradicate the scourge of apartheid.

The people and Government of Peru are attentively following political developments in South Africa in the hope that the efforts being made, in spite of the obstacles that arise, will lead as quickly as possible to the establishment of a just and egalitarian society, thus avoiding so much unnecessary suffering.

SUDAN

Message from the Government

[Original: English]

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of the Sudan, I have the great honour, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa on 9 August 1991, to reiterate our constant stance supporting the courageous struggle of women in South Africa in protest against the racist regime's pass laws. We are confident that this courageous struggle will continue and end victoriously.

SURINAME

Message from Mr. Johannes S. P. Kraag, President of the Republic of Suriname

[Original: English]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa, I would like to reaffirm, on behalf of the people and Government of the Republic of Suriname, our solidarity and unwavering support to the people, especially the women, of South Africa, in their struggle for freedom.

The people and Government of Suriname condemn, once again, the South African regime for its policy of racial suppression of the majority of the people of South Africa. The struggle for the black women has recently gained new momentum and we hope that our expectations aroused by the recent developments will be fulfilled.

However, the international community should maintain international measures, including sanctions, against South Africa since the pillars of apartheid derive their authority from a more fundamental law, the South African Constitution.

THAILAND

Message from Mr. Arsa Sarasin, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: English]

On this solemn occasion to commemorate the thirty-fifth anniversary of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Woman in South Africa, I wish to reiterate, on behalf of the Government and people of Thailand, our solidarity with the South African women in their just struggle for fundamental equal rights and complete elimination of apartheid.

Since Thailand believes that all conflicts should be resolved through peaceful negotiations, we therefore are encouraged by the abrogation of all fundamental laws of the policy of apartheid by the Government of South Africa. It is our hope that all obstacles to a political settlement will soon be removed so that the formal negotiations on a new constitution can take place.

I wish to reiterate once again our firm support for the just and noble cause of South African women. I also wish them every success in their struggle for the elimination of apartheid and the achievement of a peaceful settlement in South Africa.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Message from Dr. Sahadeo Basdeo, Minister of External Affairs and International Trade

[Original: English]

On this, the tenth anniversary of the observance by the United Nations of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa, I have the honour, on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, to pay just tribute to the tenacious women of the majority population of South Africa who, over the years, have contributed to the fight to bring justice, freedom and equality to their country.

Thirty-five years ago an estimated 20,000 South African women took to the streets to protest the extension of the detested pass laws to African women, evincing by this action the courage which has long epitomized their struggle against the abhorrent system of apartheid. Today, due to the perseverance and the many sacrifices of the women who struggled alongside their menfolk and children, those pass laws and many other oppressive laws of apartheid have been abolished.

TUNISIA

Message from Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia

[Original: Arabic]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa against racial discrimination, I am happy once again to convey Tunisia's unconditional support for the struggle of the people of South Africa for freedom and dignity.

In our belief in the right of women to dignity and equality and our faith in the effective role they can play in building society and contributing to

the development process, Tunisia of the new dispensation, which has made more gains for Tunisian women and accords them an elevated status in a balanced democratic society, follows with great interest and admiration the struggle of women in South Africa and their steadfast efforts for emancipation, freedom and equality.

We note with optimism the positive steps that have been taken for the elimination of racial discrimination in South Africa, and we are prompted by the hope that the women of the country will be able to play their usual role and contribute to the building of a society sustained by justice, progress and prosperity.

VANUATU

Message from the Government

[Original: English]

On the occasion of the thirty-fifth anniversary of the courageous demonstration of South African women in protest against the pass laws of the illegitimate racist regime of South Africa, we commend the women of South Africa for the great sacrifices they have made in advancing the cause of equality and justice in their country. The struggle for equality and justice in South Africa and the role played by the women of South Africa in that struggle have inspired men, women and children all over the world. As the system of institutionalized racism known as apartheid enters its death throes, new challenges confront the people of South Africa. We are confident that the women of South Africa will continue to play a leading role in shaping the future of that potentially great country.

VENEZUELA

Message from Dr. Armando Durán, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Spanish]

As we celebrate yet another International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa, I am pleased, on behalf of the Government and people of Venezuela, to reiterate our solidarity with and support for the valiant struggle that the women of South Africa are carrying on against the policy of racial discrimination of the Pretoria Government, while not neglecting their central role in the nuclear family and society as a whole.

Unfortunately, there remain on the books unjust laws similar to those that gave rise to the demonstration of 9 August 1956, during which more than 20,000 women gathered in front of the Union Building in Pretoria to protest against the so-called Native Amendment Act: thousands of women united to demand the abolition of the pass laws for women and for the oppressed black majority.

Venezuela reiterates its repudiation of all discriminatory and racist practices and its support for the just struggle of the South African people to create a democratic society whose decisions will be the product of multiracial participation. Pressure must continue to be exerted on the racist regime and the sanctions established under the auspices of the United Nations must continue to be applied until such time as equality of rights for the entire population is constitutionally guaranteed.

In spite of the latest measures taken by the Government of Pretoria to dismantle the existing discriminatory regime, the international community must keep a watchful eye on that process which is to lead to a new united, non-racial, non-segregationist and democratic South Africa.

II. MESSAGES FROM NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

SOVIET AFRO-ASIAN SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

[Original: English]

The Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee extends greetings to participants in the meeting of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid devoted to the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of women in South Africa.

The respect for fundamental rights of women has always been the indicator of the level of democracy in any country. Black women in South Africa are subjected to the most brutal forms of exploitation and oppression. We are convinced that only the elimination of apartheid, the process to which women contributed so heavily, will change their lives for the better.

However the transformation of South Africa has not yet acquired irreversible character. We are convinced therefore of the need to maintain international pressure on the Government of that country. We are using this occasion to reiterate to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid our readiness to cooperate in the interests of the full elimination of apartheid.

WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

[Original: English]

The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and its affiliated organizations have always highly appreciated and fully supported the heroic struggle of the South African women against apartheid, demonstrated so exemplarily 35 years ago during the Pretoria gathering against the extension of the humiliating pass laws to African women.

Since then, 9 August has been commemorated as an ocasion to reiterate the commitment of the international community to contribute to the final elimination of apartheid and to the establishment of such a society in South Africa in which all people of the country may equally enjoy fundamental human rights and freedoms.

In spite of all important positive developments and changes that have taken place in South Africa as a result of the firm determination and courage of its people, supported by incessant international solidarity, the persistence of apartheid policies, practices and structures still continues to have a devastating effect on the living and working conditions of South African women, who remain the most politically oppressed and economically exploited section of the population.

WFTU therefore calls upon the world trade union movement and all democratic forces to intensify their solidarity with the struggle of African women in order to ensure that their rights to legal and social equality be incorporated in the constitution of a post-apartheid South Africa and the new Government be committed to a comprehensive programme of affirmative action for women.

On the occasion of this International Day, WFTU wishes to reiterate its readiness to participate actively in all initiatives of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid aimed at the establishment of a united, democratic and non-racial society in South Africa.